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Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/118, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. This report describes efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions. The reporting period is from May 2011 to April 2012. During that period the Palestinian Authority completed its two-year State-building programme. The United Nations enhanced its support to those efforts through its Medium-Term Response Plan. The United Nations is currently executing $1.2 billion of works under that plan and is seeking an additional $1.7 billion for planned works. This complements the humanitarian programming outlined in the 2012 Consolidated Appeal of $416.7 million, of which 38 per cent has been funded as of April 2012.

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Despite some diplomatic progress between the Israelis and Palestinians in early 2012, the parties have been unable to resume negotiations. The absence of a political horizon that would match progress in the Palestinian State-building agenda remains a fundamental obstacle to further progress. Settlement activity, demolitions of Palestinian property, and displacement increased in 2011. Prospects for elections and for establishing a Palestinian unity government of technocrats remained uncertain, despite limited progress in the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process.

Significant economic growth was realized over the reporting period. It was primarily led by public expenditure in the West Bank and construction in Gaza. Trade sectors of the economy were most affected by the restrictions on movement and access and low levels of investment, especially in Gaza, bringing into question the sustainability of recent growth. Unemployment and food insecurity declined, but remained high, particularly in Gaza and Area C of the West Bank.

Over the reporting period, the United Nations intensified its efforts to respond to those and other challenges, focusing particularly on the areas where the Palestinian Authority was least able to extend its services: Gaza, and Area C and East Jerusalem of the West Bank. The United Nations worked at scale on reconstruction in Gaza, having received approval for US$ 365 million of projects requiring material that needs to be approved by the Government of Israel. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund was used to channel US$ 22 million for the construction of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools and would serve as an appropriate channel for the United Nations recovery and development work throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/118, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and of the needs still unmet, and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. Also included is a summary of key political developments and challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community continued to work to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority and negotiations between the parties. The reporting period is from May 2011 to April 2012.

2. Information on the living and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular: (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/66/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several documents. The Consolidated Appeals Process for 2012, with a narrower focus than in previous years, sought $417 million to address the humanitarian needs by enhancing the protective environment and tackling food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, Area C, including the seam zones, and East Jerusalem. The United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan was revised in 2011, bringing it more closely in line with the Palestinian National Development Plan and strengthening linkages with the Consolidated Appeal. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy, which was estimated at $675 million for 2010-2011, excluding emergency relief interventions. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 outlined priority development needs in the amount of $4 billion.

4. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority continued its efforts to support the peace process and to ensure effective coordination among the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

5. The current framework for negotiations was provided by the Middle East Quartet in its statement of 23 September 2011. The Quartet called on both sides to

resume negotiations, submit proposals on territory and security within three months, and make "substantial progress" on those two issues within six months. After 15 months without direct talks, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held several meetings, starting on 3 January 2012 in Amman under the auspices of King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh of Jordan. On 17 April, a senior Palestinian delegation met with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, in Jerusalem to deliver a letter from the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and a joint statement following the meeting noted the commitment of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to achieving peace. The United Nations has also continuously urged both sides to avoid provocations that would be detrimental to the prospects for peace.

6. On 23 September 2011, citing lack of movement in negotiations and continued Israeli settlement activity, President Abbas submitted to the Secretary-General an application for United Nations membership. The Secretary-General immediately transmitted the application to the Security Council. It remains under the consideration of the Security Council. On 31 October 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considered favourably a similar application and granted membership in the organization. Those steps were viewed negatively by Israel, and the Government of Israel withheld the Palestinian Authority's tax revenue for several weeks. UNESCO funding has also been affected because of the withholding of the United States contribution.

7. The situation in Gaza remains fragile and of serious concern for the United Nations. The de facto Hamas authority remains in control of the Gaza Strip. The lifting of the closure in the context of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) continues to be a fundamental objective of the United Nations.

8. The fragility of the calm in Gaza and southern Israel was repeatedly demonstrated by escalations in October and December 2011, with the largest escalation since operation "Cast Lead" taking place in March 2012. Militant groups continued indiscriminate firing of rockets, mortars and other munitions during those rounds of violence.

9. Israeli Sergeant First Class Gilad Shalit, held in Gaza without access since 25 June 2006, was released by Hamas on 18 October 2011, as part of an exchange agreement that included 1,027 Palestinian prisoners. UNSCO actively supported channels of dialogue throughout that period.

10. The continued Palestinian divide represents an important challenge. Palestinian factions concluded a reconciliation accord on 4 May in Cairo, which was brokered by Egypt. A follow-up agreement was reached in Doha on 6 February 2012 between President Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal that would have facilitated the formation of a transitional government and the holding of elections. Unfortunately, the process of reconciliation has not substantially advanced since the signing of those agreements.

11. While Palestinian State-building has continued to make considerable progress, this achievement is at increased risk. Progress was realized in improving the capacity of Palestinian institutions, inter alia of the security forces, which continued to provide law and order in Palestinian cities under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian institutions also continued to provide basic services, including addressing the needs of the most vulnerable members of Palestinian

society. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met on 21 March 2012 in Brussels. While the Committee reconfirmed the institutional readiness of the Palestinian Authority to assume the functions required of a future State, the primary concern of all members of the Committee was the dire financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. Committee members called upon donors to meet the $1.1 billion financing requirement of the Palestinian Authority for 2012.

12. Israeli authorities have continued to advance settlement construction in the West Bank, especially in East Jerusalem. Seizure of land for settlement building and expansion has resulted in the further shrinking of space available for Palestinians to sustain their livelihoods and develop adequate housing, basic infrastructure, services and productive capacity for economic growth. Settler violence continues to be a serious concern and remains a source of friction in the West Bank. Israeli civilians have also been affected by violence in the West Bank. Settlement activity is illegal under international law, runs counter to Israel's commitments under the road map, and is not recognized by the international community. In this regard, the Quartet has repeatedly urged the parties to refrain from actions that prejudge the outcome of negotiations.

13. Despite initial movement in January, the inability of the parties to resume negotiations is deeply concerning. The absence of a political horizon that would match progress in the Palestinian State-building agenda remains the fundamental impediment to realizing a more meaningful change for Palestinians on the ground. Political progress is vital for securing a negotiated two-State solution which ends the occupation, ends the conflict and addresses all core issues.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

14. The Government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad continued to implement key economic and fiscal reforms. Net lending in 2011 was 43 per cent lower than in 2010.[1] Efforts to improve the collection of utility bills and other revenues have been strengthened.

15. Real growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 10.7 per cent for 2011. Real GDP per capita was $1,614 in 2011 (in constant 2004 United States dollars), an increase of 7 per cent from 2010.[2] Unemployment rates dropped overall to 21 per cent in 2011, compared to 24 per cent in 2010. Growth and unemployment rates varied during the year, and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, unemployment remained at 17 per cent, while it declined from 38 per cent in 2010 to 29 per cent in the Gaza Strip.[2]

16. There has been relatively little expansion of the tradable sectors of the economy, which are the most affected by the restrictions on movement and access, bringing into question the sustainability of recent growth. Growth has been led by public expenditure in the West Bank and by the construction sector in Gaza.

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[1] See World Bank, "Stagnation or Revival? Palestinian Economic Prospects", Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (21 March 2012).

[2] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

17. Concerns about the long-term prospects of the Palestinian economy continued to include the need for recovery of the private sector, reduction of dependency on foreign aid and public expenditure, diversification of the economy, access to natural resources and removal of access restrictions on people and goods.

Humanitarian and socioeconomic developments

18. During the reporting period,[3] 99 Palestinians were killed (91 in Gaza, including 56 militants; 8 in the West Bank; overall, nine children and one woman) and 2,123 injured (471 in Gaza, including 58 militants; 1,652 in the West Bank; overall, 308 children and 119 women) by Israeli security forces, compared to 112 fatalities and 1,270 injuries during the previous period. In the West Bank, growing settler violence towards Palestinians resulted in one fatality, 145 injuries (including 24 women and 35 children), and damage to property. Four Israelis were killed, and 67 injured. Militants launched 889 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, as compared with 828 in the previous period.

19. At the end of March 2012, 203 Palestinian children were in Israeli detention for alleged security violations.

20. Demolitions of housing and livelihood assets nearly doubled to 643 structures demolished in the reporting period, following a fourfold increase in the previous reporting period. As a result, 1,160 people were displaced, more than half of them children. In the Gaza Strip, household vulnerability to food insecurity was also aggravated by lack of access to agricultural land in the Buffer Zone and, for fishermen, restrictive limits to Gaza's fishing waters.

21. The level of food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory decreased from 33 per cent in 2010 to 27 per cent in 2011, with 44 per cent in Gaza and 17 per cent in Areas A and B of the West Bank. Food insecurity levels in Area C were 24 per cent.[4] Further reductions in poverty and improved food security can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation, which require further easing of movement and access restrictions that still hinder private sector activity.[5]

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

22. Access to and movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, deteriorated during the reporting period. As of the drafting of this report, there were approximately 530 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, compared to 500 at the end of April 2011. Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C hinder development efforts, resulting in deteriorating living conditions and increased vulnerability.

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[3] Figures cover the period from 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012. Data collected by the United Nations.

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, UNRWA and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "2011 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey Report" (April 2012).

[5] See UNSCO, "Palestinian State-building: an achievement at increased risk". Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (March 2012).

23. In Gaza, the additional restrictions on land and sea access put in place by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the wake of operation "Cast Lead" remained in place. The land along the barrier with Israel remained inaccessible to Gazans, with Israel citing security concerns to deny almost all access within 1,000 to 1,500 metres of the barrier. Thirty-five per cent of Gaza's agricultural land and 85 per cent of the maritime space remained restricted, affecting 178,000 people.

24. United Nations operations encountered numerous restrictions and delays in reaching communities in the West Bank, impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees and residents. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2011 to March 2012, there were 501 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations staff at Israeli checkpoints. The majority of those incidents occurred as United Nations staff crossed the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery.

Barrier

25. Construction of the barrier continued in the north-west of the Bethlehem Governorate. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD), established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, continued its outreach and claim intake activities. More than 26,000 claims and over 250,000 supporting documents were collected. Claim intake activities in the Tubas, Jenin and Tulkarm Governorates were completed and the work is nearly finalized in the Qalqiliya Governorate as of the drafting of this report. The team of claim intakers of UNRoD has commenced its work in the Salfit Governorate.

III. United Nations response

26. The United Nations system provided substantial support in the framework of the Palestinian Authority National Development Plan and numerous multi-year national sector strategies. The United Nations extensive humanitarian programmes continued to provide essential assistance to Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, despite significant financial constraints.

A. Human and social development

27. The United Nations coordinated and delivered humanitarian assistance, including food assistance, to over 1 million people; water and sanitation assistance to over 1.5 million; and health and nutrition services to nearly 2.5 million people in the occupied Palestinian territory. The United Nations also continued to support the Palestinian Authority's State-building agenda and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied Palestinian territory through the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.8 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes, of which $1.1 billion is funded as of April 2012.

Education

28. The United Nations provided extensive support in the area of education, from direct service provision to infrastructure and policy support. UNRWA provided free school education to over 270,000 students in 341 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and the West Bank. Two thirds of those schools operated on a double-shift system, including 94 per cent of UNRWA schools in Gaza, where even that measure proved insufficient to accommodate the student population. In 2010 and 2011, UNRWA created "rotating classes" in order to absorb student growth. It provided a remedial summer learning programme for over 40,000 students, 88 per cent of whom passed the examinations following the summer programme. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund provided $22 million for the construction of UNRWA schools in Gaza.

29. The United Nations continued to provide extensive opportunities for vocational and non-formal education. UNRWA provided 1,923 youths from the West Bank and 1,560 from Gaza with technical vocational training. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) support to the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education and Higher Education under the Child-Friendly School Initiative focused on remedial learning programmes to around 13,000 children (50 per cent girls) to help them to improve their Arabic language and mathematics tests. The collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNRWA continued to provide short-term training and employment opportunities for 500 Gazans in the construction sector. UNESCO supported 29 vulnerable schools in the Access Restricted Area of Gaza by providing an integrated training and community development package, combining education and protection elements.

30. Nine United Nations agencies supported the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to develop an education response package to improve capacities for the development of inclusive and child-friendly programmes from early childhood to adolescence in 42 schools of the West Bank and Gaza.

31. The two-year support of ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Ministries of Labour and Education continued to improve entrepreneurial skills through the roll-out and nationalization of the entrepreneurial education curriculum into vocational centres, industrial schools and technical colleges.

32. Nearly 10,000 children benefited from the Palestinian Science Festival organized across Gaza and the West Bank with UNESCO support. UNESCO also continued to provide support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession in developing national professional standards. UNICEF supported in-service teacher training of around 1,124 teachers (50 per cent female) on child-cantered learning. UNICEF support to the roll-out of the School Management Information System (SMIS) included cascade training for over 1,050 school staff in 297 schools.

33. The UNDP Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme continued to implement the Al Fakhoura Scholarship Programme for Gazan students. UNRWA provided approximately 200,000 children with daily school meals in Gaza. UN-Women and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education partnered to improve health and nutrition at 210 schools, benefiting 62,000 students. The

partnership also generated substantial income for women's groups and community-based organizations, which were contracted to provide food for the school canteens.

34. The World Food Programme (WFP), in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, provided locally produced date bars — partially produced in Gaza — to 75,000 children per month in the West Bank and to approximately 80,000 children per month in 145 governmental schools in the Gaza Strip. The transfer of 144 metric tons of date bars from Gaza to the West Bank for the Ministry's school feeding programme is the first transfer of goods since the start of the closure in June 2007.

35. In an event organized in September 2011, UNICEF highlighted impediments to accessing education in vulnerable Bedouin communities in Area C. UNDP, with assistance from UNSCO and the Office of the Quartet Representative, secured six construction permits for schools in Area C.

36. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools programme across the occupied Palestinian territory and cooperated with 26 new schools for the 2010-2011 school year, benefiting 780 new students.

Health

37. The United Nations continued to provide technical advice and quality assurance, as well as the direct provision of health services. UNRWA continued to be a major provider of health-care services, operating 42 health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, and 21 health points and five mobile clinics in the West Bank, employing over 2,000 staff. The number of consultations continued to increase, reaching approximately 6.2 million for adults and adolescents in 2011, placing greater demands on UNRWA's limited medical capacity.

38. The United Nations provided key technical assistance to the Ministry of Health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has commenced a project, in partnership with the Ministry and the Norwegian Public Health Institute, to establish a National Institute of Public Health. WHO also assisted the Ministry to implement a national strategy to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases, to carry out a survey of key risk factors for non-communicable diseases and to continue to develop community-based mental health services.

39. WHO is also working with the Ministry of Health and the East Jerusalem hospitals on quality improvement in service delivery. Two governmental hospitals were selected to implement the WHO Patient Safety Friendly Hospital Initiative. A second phase of a programme is under way to improve the quality of services at the six specialized medical facilities in East Jerusalem to Joint Commission international standards. A programme in Gaza is working to improve the quality and safety of childbirth care at the seven main public hospitals. WHO has also procured medical supplies and equipment to meet essential needs in the public health system in Gaza. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported four women's health centres in Hebron, and the Jabalia and Al Buraj refugee camps in Gaza.

40. UNFPA worked with the Ministry of Health to improve women's health through a study on maternal mortality and other operational research in this area, as well as a major survey on the health profile and needs of Palestinian youth; it

supported midwife training and in-service training of health providers, and addressed quality-of-care issues, both in the West Bank and Gaza.

41. The United Nations continued to focus on programming for infants and young children. Working jointly with the Ministry of Health and the National Breastfeeding Committee, UNICEF supported the implementation of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in three hospitals in Gaza and five in the West Bank, involving sensitization workshops for 107 policymakers and 200 technical health staff. In addition, 90 health professionals in Gaza were trained on breastfeeding counselling skills and in turn reached around 13,000 mothers through health-care facilities and postnatal home visits. UNICEF also supported the finalization of the Palestinian Code of Breast Milk Substitutes.

42. UNICEF's scaling up of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses strategy led to the introduction of relevant guidelines in all Ministry of Health primary health-care clinics, enhanced knowledge of 700 health-care personnel on their use, and a slight decrease in drug use.

43. UNICEF support to the Ministry of Health's expanded immunization programme focused on areas of lowest coverage during immunization week, maintaining the high immunization rates among the most vulnerable communities. In addition, UNICEF provided the Ministry with support for all in-country vaccine procurement and logistics, and that reduced delays in vaccination.

44. UNICEF continued to support the National Nutrition Surveillance System through calibrating all measurement tools, intensifying supportive supervisory visits covering all nutrition sentinel sites and building capacities of more than 250 nutrition sentinel site staff on growth-monitoring tools, data management and the use of the Maternal and Child Health Handbook.

45. Through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, United Nations agencies are working with the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Committee to support the development and implementation of a national strategy to address HIV prevention, treatment and care, and are also working with the Ministry on control of tuberculosis.

46. In addition to advisory and capacity-building support, the United Nations assessed and improved health infrastructure. UNFPA conducted an assessment of obstetric care facilities in Gaza, followed by a rehabilitation, re-equipment and capacity-building programme covering 5 maternity clinics and 25 primary health-care centres. UNICEF provided medical equipment and supplies to a new neonatal unit in Gaza.

Employment

47. The Technical Advisory Unit at the Ministry of Labour, supported by UNDP and ILO, continues to assist in the implementation and monitoring of effective labour market policies. ILO and the Ministry of Labour signed an agreement for the revitalization of the Palestinian Employment and Social Protection Fund as part of efforts to boost job creation, private sector development and workers' rights. The Fund will provide a wide range of financial and non-financial services, including employment services, employment guarantee schemes, enterprise development support, capacity development of small and medium-size enterprises and employment-intensive public investment.

Targeted social protection

48. UNRWA distributed 546,956 food parcels and around $6 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 33,320 households through its social safety net programme. In addition, UNRWA provided a family income supplement to bridge the abject poverty gap for 10,441 individuals in the West Bank and 77,199 individuals in Gaza. A total of $9,588,242 was distributed as family income supplement under the programme. Owing to funding constraints, UNRWA could distribute only 70 per cent of the value of the family income supplement in Gaza during the first round of 2012. WFP distributed food assistance (in-kind and voucher) via the Ministry of Social Affairs to 85,000 beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip and 115,000 in the West Bank as part of the Palestinian Authority Social Safety Net.

49. UN-Habitat started a $7.6 million self-help reconstruction project aimed to re-house the 100 most vulnerable non-refugee families in the Gaza Strip whose houses were completely destroyed during the December 2008-January 2009 conflict, and develop essential basic community infrastructure.

50. ILO provided technical assistance to the newly established National Wage Committee and National Committee for Social Security, designed to propose a new minimum wage and devise a basic social security scheme, respectively.

51. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) trained 40 women in home hospitality, 10 young women artists, and 67 women artisans. As of the end of 2011, 17 new women's centres had been established, with the support of UN-Women, and they provide socioeconomic services to more than 1,800 women.

Culture

52. Palestine was admitted as a full member of UNESCO in November 2011, and it subsequently ratified eight international conventions in the field of culture, which were deposited with the Director-General of UNESCO. On 8 March 2012, it also became a party to the World Heritage Convention, subsequently submitting an emergency nomination dossier for the "Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route" in Bethlehem.

53. UNESCO continued to lead a multi-agency programme on culture and development funded through the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. In May 2011, the UNESCO action undertaken in Battir for the safeguarding of millenary cultural landscapes was awarded the Melina Mercouri Prize. In April 2012, UNESCO and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency signed a significant agreement for the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic cultural heritage sites.

Food security and agriculture

54. FAO supported more than 1,500 women and their associations to achieve improved economic conditions and food security through providing agricultural inputs, skills training and marketing support. It also provided technical support to the development of the Agriculture Sector, Strategy "Shared Vision" 2011-2013 Action Plan. The Action Plan includes 299 activities and projects with a robust gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework with concrete indicators

measuring gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in each of the activities and projects.

55. FAO assisted over 12,900 households in the West Bank and Gaza to safeguard their assets and expand their livelihoods during the reporting period. Its interventions also focused on stimulating the potential of youth to build a vibrant, productive civil society, and on empowering women as agents of development in their homes and communities. FAO has been leading a multidisciplinary United Nations joint programme aimed at improving the quality of life and dignity of women and men in Jordan Valley communities. The programme benefits 13,140 individuals directly and 4,800 indirectly.

56. WFP supported the agriculture sector through the purchase of locally produced commodities, including 1,638 metric tons of milk, 600 metric tons of salt, and 400 metric tons of date bars. In addition, WFP used one milling factory in the West Bank and two in Gaza to produce a total of 18,346 metric tons of wheat flour.

Human rights, women, children and youth

57. The United Nations continued to mainstream human rights into its work and to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority on human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) worked closely with the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its administrative capacity to be able to comply with international human rights standards, in particular the standards under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. OHCHR held workshops for Palestinian Authority officials regarding the obligations and reporting procedures under those conventions and additional workshops on monitoring human rights violations for non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

58. The special needs of women, children and youth remained a focus for the United Nations. UNFPA supported the training of 350 women from municipalities, health centres, rehabilitation centres, NGOs and local communities on psychosocial support and mental health, gender-based violence, and human rights. UNFPA continued to support four community-based networks, through which more than 35,000 vulnerable women benefited from 2,100 outreach awareness sessions. Family Protection Units established within the Police Force in the West Bank were strengthened through the training of 250 police officers and 50 prosecutors from the Office of the Prosecutor General. More than 200 Imams and women preachers participated in child rights and protection awareness training, enabling them to advocate for child rights issues during Friday sermons and religious sessions in mosques. UN-Women also provided 64 local government authorities in 17 rural areas with training to support the mainstreaming of gender into local policies and programmes. UN-Habitat started construction of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Technical and Vocational Training Centre for Underprivileged Women in Hebron.

59. UNRWA in Gaza organized Summer Games for over 200,000 children in Gaza for six weeks. Summer Games actively promoted gender equality in Gaza by offering girls a unique and safe space within which to engage in physical activity. Based on community demand, the 2011 Summer Games also incorporated games and activities to help children to learn English. In addition, 9,000 youths were given short-term employment as activity leaders.

60. The UNRWA Special Children Special Needs Initiative continued to support students who were identified as being in need of additional assistance by providing a comprehensive assessment system: physical, psychological and socioeconomic needs and detection of learning difficulties in order for those students to be referred to appropriate treatment. Out of 14,000 students identified as having special needs by joint medical and educational teams, approximately 12,000 were provided with comprehensive medical examinations, including referrals for hospitals, speech therapy and counselling.

61. UNICEF supported the Child Protection Networks led by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which provided emergency response and psychosocial support through 16 Emergency Psychosocial Teams and 21 Family Centres, reaching over 40,000 children and around 8,000 caregivers. As a result, at least 70 per cent of children and caregivers that were reached reported feeling better able to cope with difficult events.

62. UNICEF continued to lead the inter-agency working group for the monitoring and response mechanism on grave violations against children in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). Training-of-trainers workshops in the West Bank and Gaza resulted in strengthened monitoring, reporting and response capacity.

63. Together with NGOs and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNICEF continued to support 93 community-based organizations to offer quality adolescent-friendly activities. As a result, around 59,000 adolescents aged 10 to 18 participated in after-school remedial learning, recreational activities, life skills-based education, photography workshops and adolescent-led community initiatives. Almost half were girls who, without this programme, would have little or no access to activities outside the school. To ensure meeting the needs of the most vulnerable adolescents, around 75 per cent of the 93 Adolescent Friendly Spaces supported by UNICEF were located in vulnerable areas (Gaza, Area C, refugee camps and East Jerusalem). UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNFPA, initiated the process of developing National Minimum Standards for Youth and Adolescent Friendly Spaces, which will be used to improve the quality of after-school programmes and ensure that they meet the needs of adolescent girls and boys.

64. UNFPA supported a project to increase Palestinian youth participation in early recovery, improve their prospects for employment and reduce their social and economic marginalization. Until the end of the year, the project reached over 1,500 youths (49 per cent young women). A second phase is under way in 2011-2012.

65. ILO continued to support the legal clinic run by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions in raising awareness of Palestinian workers regarding applicable laws and associated rights when working in Israel.

66. Within the framework of the joint United Nations Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, ILO assisted in the establishment of a National Committee for Women's Employment. In February 2012, the Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the Committee, which is developing a three-year plan to assist the Ministry of Labour and social partners in implementing specific measures to promote women's employment and their protection in the workplace. ILO initiated a partnership with the Islamic University of Gaza to implement a skills

training and job placement programme for unemployed women engineers in the construction sector.

Environment

67. The United Nations strengthened efforts to protect the environment. In cooperation with local communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO supported the rehabilitation and greening of around 2,500 dunums of rangeland in the southern part of the West Bank during 2011. Furthermore, in the framework of its efforts to improve water availability and rationalize water resources management, FAO established around 400 community and household-level rainwater harvesting cisterns, in addition to more than 50 Grey Waste Water Treatment Units serving farming and herding families and communities in the West Bank, especially in areas prone to water scarcity. ILO is currently supporting preparatory work and running necessary research for introducing green jobs through skills upgrading and green construction in Gaza under the Green Jobs Initiative.

68. In 2011, UNRWA received funding to build a new green school that will provide educational facilities for 800 students. The building relies only on renewable and free locally available resources instead of waterworks and energy grids.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

69. The 2012 Consolidated Appeals Process for the occupied Palestinian territory seeks $417 million. It focuses on providing protection to the most vulnerable populations in Gaza, Area C and East Jerusalem and addressing food insecurity, which remains persistently high. The 2011 Consolidated Appeals Process received $305 million of the $537 million requested.

Emergency food support

70. WFP supported about 665,000 vulnerable and food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians, 351,000 in the West Bank and 313,000 in Gaza. UNRWA provided emergency food aid to about 650,000 refugees in Gaza and 186,173 individuals in the West Bank. The joint assistance programme between UNRWA and WFP for 30,000 refugee and non-refugee Bedouin herders in the West Bank yielded results — food insecurity in this group dropped from 79 per cent to 55 per cent.

71. The WFP urban voucher project in the West Bank assisted 4,735 vulnerable households during the reporting period, providing a financial stimulus to the local economy. A similar project in Gaza targeted 2,335 households. In 2011, the voucher programme in the occupied Palestinian territory injected $7,527,000 into the local economy, where nearly half the vouchers were redeemed to purchase dairy products.

Emergency income generation

72. UNRWA provided temporary work opportunities to 56,031 beneficiaries to alleviate the impact of high unemployment and poverty rates, creating more than 3.3 million days of employment. In Gaza alone, an estimated $22 million was injected into the local economy. UNFPA provided cash-for-work to over 1,000 youths for self-designed community improvement micro-initiatives. Despite the positive impact of the UNRWA Job Creation Programme, only 11 per cent of the

$57 million required for the programme in Gaza was received. The number of active contracts is less than 25 per cent of its 2010 level.

Emergency health support

73. WHO continued leading the Health and Nutrition Cluster, which provides essential humanitarian health and nutrition services to vulnerable communities in the West Bank and Gaza and builds local capacities for rapid response to new emergencies. The Cluster expanded its operations in 2011, delivering essential health and nutrition services to 2,120,077 Palestinians, or 85 per cent of the vulnerable populations identified by the Cluster.

74. In the West Bank, UNRWA mobilized the operation of five mobile clinic teams aimed at targeting approximately 13,000 patients per month, including the most vulnerable and isolated populations (mostly refugees) with difficult access to health services. UNRWA mobile health clinics include mental health counsellors and also coordinate closely with other mobile health service providers, including the Ministry of Health and NGOs.

75. To maintain sustainability of medicine provision to refugees in the West Bank, UNRWA worked with Palestinian pharmaceutical companies to successfully shorten the delivery time and maintain adequate stock for essential medicine. UNRWA also continued to help to facilitate delivery of pharmaceuticals to Gaza by aiding with the cold storage chain at the Central Pharmacy in Jerusalem for medicines procured for Gaza and delayed because of restrictive Israeli logistics, as well as making transfers of essential diabetic drugs to Gaza health clinics from Jerusalem.

76. WHO has been leading advocacy on the right to health, focusing, among other issues, on referral of patients out of Gaza for specialized care and on access to East Jerusalem hospitals. Far fewer patients had their permits to exit Gaza denied or delayed in 2011 — down from 40 per cent in 2006 to 6 per cent in 2011.

77. WHO continued to monitor shortages of drugs and disposables, fill the gaps in pharmaceutical supplies, and help to coordinate the import of medical supplies donated to Gaza. That entailed renting additional warehouses and helping to sort, register, store and deliver medical supplies, as well as disposing of expired or unusable medicines. The organization also provided spare parts and technical assistance to maintain, repair and improve existing equipment.

78. UNFPA supplied the Palestinian health system's needs for family planning commodities, and began the rehabilitation of 5 maternities and 24 primary health-care clinics in Gaza as well as related supplies, equipment and training.

Emergency water and sanitation support

79. The UNICEF-led Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster identified crucially vulnerable target areas and populations through the collation of partner agency assessments on the basis of agreed indicators; established a monitoring system using the harmonized database to track response and avoid overlap; enhanced advocacy concerning crucial issues; strengthened cluster partner capacity through trainings and workshops; and facilitated fundraising for critical humanitarian needs through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) funding mechanisms.

80. UNICEF humanitarian support in the WASH Cluster focused on providing protected and reliable access to sufficient safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. UNICEF supported the upgrading of the water network at Dhahiriya town by the Palestinian Water Authority, nearly doubling water availability for a total of 2,230 households. UNICEF supported the improvement of the Rafah sewage network, benefiting at completion approximately 17,000 people and reducing groundwater pollution. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNICEF supported the construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in 78 schools, providing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for around 56,874 students and 1,809 teachers. Hygiene promotion activities benefited 5,200 students. Tankered water was provided to 216 schools in Gaza throughout the scholastic year 2010/2011, benefiting 124,529 children.

81. UNRWA Gaza supported water and sanitation service providers operating outside refugee camps to procure sufficient quantities of fuel and other supplies. Such interventions were critical owing to persisting electricity outages. In 2011, 1.66 million litres of fuel and solar oil were distributed to municipalities and Solid Waste Management Councils and the Coastal Municipal Water Utility to ensure the continuity of water and sanitation services and treat mosquito breeding sites. UNRWA supported some NGOs providing key social services with 34,500 litres of fuel for their generators and vehicles. Based on needs, it also provided municipalities with tools and spare parts to be used for sanitation purposes. In addition, UNRWA carried out a series of urgently needed works on water and sanitation networks within camps. In the West Bank, an estimated 154,518 refugees living in 13 camps in three areas (Hebron, Jerusalem and Nablus) benefited from the sanitation physical works in 2011.

Emergency agriculture support

82. FAO led and coordinated the response to the drought and water shortage affecting the livelihood of livestock-herding communities in the West Bank. FAO distributed more than 4,500 tons of animal fodder, seeds and seedlings of drought-tolerant fodder crops and shrubs, veterinary and animal health inputs and vaccines, benefiting around 2,000 herding families.

83. FAO supported the response to a major pest outbreak on date palm fields threatening all date palm plantations in Gaza. It continued to monitor vulnerability to climatic, economic and political shocks for small-scale farmers and herders in the occupied Palestinian territory, and to strengthen collaboration with the WASH Cluster, the monitoring system and response framework designed to result in a more coordinated humanitarian approach. FAO advocated for the economic security of those vulnerable communities.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

84. The United Nations maintained support to the Palestinian Authority's efforts to improve the collection of revenue and accelerate customs clearance procedures. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) renewed an ongoing collaboration with the Palestinian Customs Authority to modernize and strengthen its existing systems. UNCTAD initiated efforts to strengthen the economic modelling and forecasting capacity of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

85. UN-Women continued to support the Ministry of Women's Affairs in implementing the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, including through the formulation of memorandums of understanding that were signed with five line ministries. UN-Women commenced a programme to improve access to justice for women victims of violence and supported the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing an accreditation policy for anti-violence shelters, which was endorsed by the Cabinet in August 2011. UNRWA participated in the development of national protocols on gender-based violence through the UNRWA Family and Child Protection Programme.

86. WFP provided support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in the development of the Palestinian Authority Social Safety Net by using a single targeting mechanism.

87. ILO continues to support the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour through the development and implementation of a comprehensive capacity-building programme that is based on the Labour Inspection Strategy developed in 2011. ILO also supported national efforts for the promotion of social dialogue in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to ensuring relevance and coherence of socioeconomic policies and fostering comprehensive and sustainable development. In August 2011, the Council of Ministers endorsed the establishment of a Palestinian Economic and Social Council, which ILO will serve as a technical adviser.

88. UNICEF continued to support legislation, policy and institutional advances towards a national framework enabling the strengthening of a protective environment for girls and boys. That included support to the Ministry of Social Affairs for the development of a National Child Protection Action Plan with a broad range of national and international partners. UNICEF supported broad reform at the Ministry of Social Affairs, resulting in improved harmonization and efficiency in work processes in addition to capacity-building activities for the Ministry's child protection professionals towards improved monitoring and reporting on cases of child abuse, and the efficient use of the referral protocol and electronic Child Protection database. UNICEF support to the Ministry included the finalization of the Justice for Children Law and its presentation by the Minister to the Cabinet for endorsement, together with a national planning process for the juvenile justice sector. UNICEF supported the evaluation of the non-violence in school policy pilot project for its roll-out at the national level.

89. UNFPA trained Palestinian Authority ministries on developing social indicators and on the use of data in national planning. UNFPA also supported the implementation of the first national migration survey. ILO is supporting the Ministry of Labour in the development of a revised labour law.

90. To further strengthen the National Monitoring System, UNICEF together with the respective ministries and in partnership with UNFPA, focused on the development of the national indicators on women, children and youth.

91. UNDP worked with the Palestinian Ministry of Justice to develop its institutional capacity and facilitate the improved delivery of justice. Focusing on legislative drafting, administration of justice and legal aid, the programme aimed at strengthening the Ministry's technical and operational capacity. UNDP established a working group comprised of Palestinian Government officials, civil society representatives and criminal law experts from the Arab world to provide advice on the development of a penal code. UNDP also introduced new courthouse case management software.

92. UN-Habitat provided technical support to the Ministry of Local Government in organizing the first Palestinian Urban Forum in Nabulus in March 2012, and to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in the development of a housing strategy and policy for the occupied Palestinian territory.

D. Private sector development

93. UNRWA financed 14,600 loans valued at $22.97 million for Palestinian microenterprises and households. Thirty per cent of loans went to women and a third went to youth. The programme continued to run at a profit by maintaining an operational self-sufficiency rate of 122 per cent.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

94. Under the auspices of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, collaboration and coordination between the numerous donor and United Nations forums were strengthened during the reporting period. The Humanitarian Country Team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. The United Nations Country Team revised its Medium-Term Response Plan to ensure greater coherence with the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013. Efforts to forge constructive partnerships between the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority and the broader aid community were strengthened. The United Nations continued the preparation of reports of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on a semi-annual basis, and developed strategies and programming for East Jerusalem, Gaza, capacity development and the Consolidated Appeal for humanitarian action.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

95. In 2011, the Palestinian Authority struggled to meet its financial obligations, as expenditures were mostly in line with the budget but revenue was less than projected, partly owing to lower-than-expected growth, and external financing fell short of the budget target. That led the Palestinian Authority to accumulate approximately $540 million in arrears. The external financing requirement for 2012 is estimated at $1.1 billion. Timely donor support to bridge this shortfall — combined with the uninterrupted flow of clearance revenue collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority — will be essential to meeting the Palestinian Authority's financial obligations in the coming year.

Donor coordination

96. The Local Aid Coordination Structure continued to serve as a key forum for discussing and providing input to new sector strategies and the National Development Plan 2011-2013. The coordination of humanitarian advocacy and information, led by the Secretariat Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also continued.

97. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held. The Joint Liaison Committee, a tripartite coordination mechanism including the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and representatives of the international community, also met twice.

V. Unmet needs

98. The 2011 Consolidated Appeal requested a revised amount of $537 million for critical humanitarian activities, of which 57 per cent was funded. The 2012 Consolidated Appeal requests $417 million, of which 38 per cent was funded as of April. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a shortfall of $70 million for 2012, as well as its 2012 Emergency Appeal for $379 million, of which only $55 million is currently funded. United Nations agencies are seeking $1.7 billion to support planned multi-annual development interventions in the context of the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. This funding would complement the $1.2 billion of ongoing United Nations recovery and development projects in Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund remains a viable mechanism for channelling support to the Medium-Term Response Plan.

VI. Challenges

99. Restrictions on movement and access, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and associated displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, increased. Furthermore, significant settlement activity continued to take place in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, heightening tension on the ground.

100. While the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory grew in 2011, further growth would require a revitalization of the private sector and a further easing of restrictions on movement and access.

101. The United Nations has received approval for works amounting to about $365 million in Gaza involving material that requires the approval of the Government of Israel. Maintaining a flow of approvals remained essential in serving the needs of Gaza's population.

102. Despite sound fiscal policy on the part of the Palestinian Authority, continued and predictable support to the Palestinian Authority's budget is necessary to finance the current deficit and ensure stability of the ongoing reform efforts.

VII. Conclusions

103. The operational context for the United Nations in the reporting period remained unchanged, while threats to the livelihoods of Palestinians, particularly demolitions in Area C and the continued closure of Gaza, continue to pose formidable obstacles to economic development. Despite economic improvements, persistently high unemployment and food insecurity in Gaza, the rise in demolitions and the continued closure and restrictions on the movement of people and goods hinder sustainable progress. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.